

Abstract 533

TITLE: Differences Between Young and Old Injection Drug Users in San Francisco

AUTHORS: Kral, AH; Lorvick, J; Edlin, BR

BACKGROUND/OBJCTIVES: The majority of research on injection drug users (IDUs) has focused on older IDUs. Several recent studies conducted by CDC researchers (CIDUS) have indicated that IDUs younger than 30 are at higher risk for HIV transmission. This study assesses differences in HIV risk among younger and older IDUs.

METHODS: 195 IDUs were recruited using targeted sampling in two adjacent San Francisco communities, one where young IDUs congregate and one where older IDUs congregate. All participated in the study at the same centrally located field-site in April 1997. IDUs were classified as "young" if they were under 30 years of age (n = 8) and "old" if they were 30 years or older (n =137). Quantitative interviews and HIV testing were conducted. Chi square tests and logistic regression analysis were used to determine significant differences (p<.05).

RESULTS: While there was no difference in gender of this sample (38% of youth and 37% of older IDUs were female), youth were more likely to be white (79% vs. 21%; p<0.001) and homeless (73% vs. 26%; p<0.001). HIV prevalence did not differ significantly by age (5% of youth and 9% of older IDUs). In self-report of activities in the 30 days prior to interview, youth were more likely to share syringes (52% vs. 9%; p<0.001), give their used syringes to other IDUs (52% vs. 14%; p<0.001), share cookers (72% vs. 31%; p<0.001), share filters (52% vs. 28%; p<0.001), and report having been injected by someone else (53% vs. 22%; p<0.001). In logistic regression analysis, youth (Adjusted Odds Ratio = 6.29; 95% CI = 2.56, 15.42) and white race (Adjusted Odds Ratio = 2.71; 95% CI = 1.09,6.78) were strong predictive factors of sharing syringes.

CONCLUSIONS: Young injectors in San Francisco were six times as likely to share syringes. They were also more likely to engage in other injection-related risks than older IDUs. Youth-specific services and prevention programs need to be implemented where young IDUs congregate.

PRESENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Alex H. Kral

Address: Urban Health Study

3180 18th St., Suite 02

San Francisco, CA 94110

Telephone: (415) 502-7221

Fax: (415) 476-6406

E-mail: ALKRAL@ITSA.UCSF.EDU